

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

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TAGS: UN, UNDP, FAO, EAID, AORG
SUBJECT: PILOT STUDY OF UN ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES - THAILAND

REF: STATE 223054 AND 22687

1. USREP VISIT TO BANGKOK AMOUNTED TO LITTLE MORE THAN
HALF A DAY AUGUST 3 IN VIEW OF DECISION TO SPEND 3 DAYS
IN BANGLADESH INSTEAD.

2. PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES OF POSSIBLE INTEREST INCLUDED
CALL ON RES REP GARCIA, LUNCH WITH HIM AND WFP REP,
AND VISI- TO FAO REGIONAL HQ.

3. BASED ON CONVERSATION WITH GARCIA, USREP BELIEVES
PILOT STUDY SHOULD GIVE ATTENTION TO PROBLEM OF HOST
GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR AND CONTINUATION OF PROJECTS EMPLOY-
ING U.N. SPECIALIZED AGENCY PERSONNEL AND FUNDED BY UNDP.
GARCIA QUITE FRANK IN ADMITTING THAT THAI GOVERNMENT AGENCIES
OFTEN EAGER TO BID AND COMPETE FOR PROJECTS TO BE FUNDED BY
IPF NOT BECAUSE THEY WILLING, EAGER OR ABLE TO PROVIDE PROMISING
PERSONNEL TO IMPLEMENT PROJECTS, BUT BECAUSE BACKSTOPPING
A PROJECT GIVES THEIR AGENCY ADDED THAI GOVERNMENT PROJECT
MONEY AND POSITIONS. AS RESULT, PERSONNEL WILLING TO GO TO
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NON-URBAN LOCATIONS, LEARN NEW SKILLS AND ADMINISTER PROGRAMS
AFTER SPECIALIZED AGENCY PERSONNEL LEAVE ARE HARD TO COME BY.
IN HIS VIEW, FAO PARTICULARLY AFFECTED BY THIS SITUATION (WHICH
BY NO MEANS PECULIAR TO THAILAND) BECAUSE IT MORE FREQUENTLY
OPERATES IN LOCATIONS DISTANT FROM BANGKOK.

4. GARCIA SIGNALLED ANOTHER PROBLEM (ALSO NOT PECULIR

TO THAILAND) OF HIGH COST OF U.N. CONSULTANT AND PROBLEMS
POSED BY GAP BETWEEN THEIR SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES AND THOSE
OF LOCAL COUNTERPARTS. SITUATION PARTICULARLY APPARENT
WHERE BOTH CATEGORIES WORK TOGETHER ON SMALL PROJECTS.
GARCIA SAW TC/DC AS ONE TREND WHICH COULD REDUCE THIS PROBLEM,
PROVIDED SOME NON-DISCRIMINATORY METHOD COULD BE FOUND FOR LOWER
SCALE OF REMUNERATION TO THOSE TC/DC SPECIALISTS WHO WERE NOT
PROGRAMMED THROUGH U.S. SYSTEM (ED: THIS COULD YIELD THREE
TIER INSTEAD OF TWO TIER SYSTEM OF EXPERTS).

5. WFP REP NOTED THAT WFP ONLY BEGINNING TO OPERATE
PROJECTS IN THAILAND; MAIN ACTION OF REP SO FAR RELATES
TO MOVEMENT OF RICE FROM BANGKOK TO LAOS, AN EXPERIENCE IN
PROTRACTED ORIENTAL BARGAINING OVER TRANSPORT METHODS AND
COSTS WHICH LEFT HIM PERSUADED THAT LAO FOOD EMERGENCY
WAS PERHAPS LESS URGENT THAN IT MADE BY LAO GOVERNMENT TO
APPEAR. (THIS REMARK PREDATED RECENT MEKONG FLOOD).

6. CALL AT FAO REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS PRODUCED FEW
INSIGHTS SINCE MANY OFFICERS ON LEAVE OR STILL IN KUALA LUMPUR.
ACTIVITIES OF THIS OFFICE AND OF ESCAP MAY BE OUTSIDE OF
SCOPE OF PILOT STUDY. HOWEVER, IF THEY ARE NOT, SOME
EXAMINATION OF RELATIONS OF FAO REGIONAL OFFICE AND ESCAP MAY
BE IN ORDER. FOR EXAMPLE, THERE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN SOME TENSION
OVER WHETHER FAO OR ESCAP HAD THE LEAD ON INTEGRATED RURAL
DEVELOPMENT IN FAR EAST AND ASIA. RURAL DEVELOPMENT UNIT IN
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FAO BANGKOK OFFICE APPEARED ACTIVE AND ENTHUSIASTIC AND WELL
SUPPORTED BY FAO REGIONAL REP. ESCAP ACTIVITY TALKED UP BY
SYG MARZMIS AT FERC IN KUALA LUMPUR NOT OBSERVED BY USREP AS
HE DID NOT CALL AT ESCAP.

7. USREP DID NOT VISIT ANY PROJECTS IN THAILAND, ALTHOUGH
HE DID RUN THROUGH COUNTRY PROGRAM WITH RES REP AND
DISCUSS STATE OF RES REP'S DEVELOPMENT COORDINATION ROLE.
GARCIA MADE GOOD IMPRESSION FOR KNOWLEDGABILITY AND CANDOR,
BUT TIME WAS TOO SHORT FOR USREP TO OFFER ANY SERIOUS
JUDGEMENTS ON HIS OR OVERALL U.N. PERFORMANCE IN THAILAND.HOLMES

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